HERE’S THE SCOOP:
The majority of children coming into foster care must wait in a Child Welfare office for at least two hours while a social worker tries to find them a suitable placement. As you can imagine, this is a time of high anxiety for kids. Recently removed from their home, a child’s future is now unknown.

The notion of a Welcome Box is simple: while the child waits in the office, a social worker gives them a box of age-appropriate items to occupy their time. They will take this box with them into their new foster home. Since many children enter foster care with very few belongings, the psychological importance of these Welcome Boxes cannot be underestimated.

Making a Welcome Box is a simple way to comfort a child entering foster care. And, it’s a great way to involve your entire family in caring for our community’s children.

Thank you for loving children entering foster care through your Welcome Box!

HERE’S HOW TO PUT YOUR BOX TOGETHER:

1. Buy a photo storage/memory box
   Photo storage boxes are very sturdy and often come with fun designs. You can buy one at craft stores like Jo-ann Fabrics and Michaels.

2. Fill it
   Fill the box with all of the items from the Essential list and at least 7 items from the Extras list.

3. Write a note
   Tape a handwritten note inside to the box’s lid with an encouraging message such as:
   “You are special”
   “You are cared about”
   “You matter”
   “You are important”
   “Made for you with love”
   Your message should be easily visible and should not include religious language.

4. Label it
   Cut out the welcome box label, circle the gender and age group for your box, and tape on the narrow side of the box.

5. Seal it
   Place a rubber-band around your box so it stays together.

6. Drop it off
   Contact a Welcome Box Coordinator in your district about drop off details. Find yours at www.embraceoregon.org/volunteer/welcome-boxes
   Please do not drop your box off at DHS.
WHAT GOES INSIDE:

Here is a simple guide for filling a Welcome Box with creative, age-appropriate items. Please include everything listed under ESSENTIAL and enough EXTRAS to fill the box.

**AGE 2-4**

**ESSENTIALS:**
Coloring book, crayons or colored pencils, two non-perishable snacks (i.e. applesauce, pretzels, fruit snacks, crackers), toddler-sized toothbrush, non-flouride toothpaste, flashlight (include batteries) and nighttime

**EXTRAS:**
Toys: stuffed animals, balls, cars, kazoo, etc.  
Arts & Crafts: stickers, playdough, bubbles, etc.  
Hygiene: hairbrush/comb, band-aids, socks, etc.  
Other: taggy blanket, sippy cup, water bottle, sunglasses, small book, etc.

**AGE 5-9**

**ESSENTIALS:**
Coloring book or a pad of drawing paper; markers, colored pencils or crayons; two non-perishable snacks (i.e. applesauce, pretzels, fruit snacks, crackers, granola bars); toothbrush and toothpaste (can be travel-size); flashlight (include batteries) and nightlife

**EXTRAS:**
Toys: small stuffed animals, balls, doll, memory card game, small Lego set, etc.  
Arts & Crafts: pen, crayons, stamp and ink pad, stickers, etc.  
Hygiene: socks, hairbrush, comb, lip balm, hair accessories, fun band-aids, etc.  
Other: books, water bottle, watch, foldable nylon bag, small photo album, etc.

**AGE 10-12**

**ESSENTIALS:**
Blank journal or drawing pad; markers or colored pencils; two non-perishable snacks (i.e. applesauce, pretzels, fruit snacks, crackers, granola bars); toothbrush and toothpaste (can be travel-size); flashlight (include batteries) and nighttime

**EXTRAS:**
Toys: playing cards, yo-yo, paper airplane kit, small Lego set, etc.  
Arts & Crafts: mad libs, word search, bead sets, etc.  
Hygiene: socks, hairbrush, comb, lip balm, hair accessories, cardboard nail file, nail polish, travel-size toiletries, etc.  
Other: Books, water bottle, watch, sunglasses, foldable nylon bag, gum, photo album, etc.

**AGE 13-17**

**ESSENTIALS:**
Blank journal and/or drawing pad; colored pencils; two or more non-perishable snacks (i.e. applesauce, fruit snacks, crackers, granola bars); toothbrush and toothpaste (can be travel-size); flashlight (include batteries)

**EXTRAS:**
Toys: playing cards, ear phones, books  
Arts & Crafts: bead sets, model cars, etc.  
Hygiene: socks, hairbrush, comb, lip balm, compact mirror, deodorant, nail polish, feminine products in a discreet case, etc.  
Other: gift cards (Burgerville, Target, Regal, etc.), flip flops, sunglasses, gum, etc.